

## MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

June 14, 2017

City Hall, Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

**Members Present:** Bob Marchewka, Vice-Chairman Josh Cyr, Sarah LaChance, John Bosen, Eric Spear, Ron Zolla (via teleconference), Dana Levenson, John Pratt

**Excused:** Everett Eaton, Chairman; Jen Zorn

**Absent:** Philip Cohen

**City Staff:** City Manager John Bohenko, Economic Development Program Manager Nancy Carmer

**Others:** Molly Donovan, UNH Ext.

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Vice-Chairman Marchewka opened the special meeting of the EDC at 7:35 a.m. He stated that the purpose of the meeting is to review and discuss the findings of the Draft Business Retention and Expansion Survey Report that was distributed to members at the June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 EDC meeting.

He introduced Molly Donovan, Community and Economic Development Specialist at the University of New Hampshire Extension who was present to provide a summary of the survey data and facilitate a discussion on next steps in the process.

Following introductions of the Commissioners, Ms. Donovan reviewed the draft report findings. She said that 81% of the businesses surveyed are locally owned and 71% started their businesses in Portsmouth. On the whole most businesses rank the City very highly as a place to do business and to live. The quality of life is ranked equally high and is a major reason for locating here. Most businesses are satisfied with the quality of the schools and the workforce but there are some issues finding qualified workers due to low unemployment. Ninety-five of those businesses surveyed feel that the City supports business.

She reviewed graphs and associated comments for other topics covered in the survey such as average wages, broadband, expansion/relocation plans, succession planning and satisfaction with local business areas. Following discussion and suggested additions and edits by the EDC, Ms. Donovan opened the floor for discussion on next steps and specifically on the following questions:

1. How to engage business going forward?
2. How to address the findings?
3. What is the best mechanism for sharing the report?

EDC members shared their thoughts on these questions and it was agreed that the first step is for Ms. Donovan to make the edits and suggested additions to the report and concurrently to reconvene the leadership team to draft potential action items to address prioritized findings as well as to suggest areas where the city already has strategies in place to address suggestions made in the draft report.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Carmer  
Economic Development Program Manager